



City of Eugene
99 W. 10th Avenue
Eugene, Oregon 97401
(541) 682-5443
(541) 682-5572 FAX
www.ci.eugene.or.us

MEMORANDUM

Date: July 22, 2008

To: Lane County Board of Commissioners

From: Tracy Lampman, Chair of Blue Ribbon Committee on Financing for Homelessness
Richie Weinman, City of Eugene staff, 682-5533

Subject: Review of Final Report: Blue Ribbon Committee on Homelessness

One of the Eugene City Council's annual goals relates to addressing homelessness and housing. City Council acknowledged that addressing homelessness is in the community's best interest for a variety of reasons that range from concern for human welfare at one end of the spectrum to the direct and indirect costs of homelessness at the other end. Because addressing housing and homelessness has a significant cost, the Mayor, with the full support of City Council appointed a committee and charged it to "*Examine the local impacts of homelessness, identify strategies and make recommendations to the City Council related to new funding and finance options.*"

The committee was broad-based and included business leaders, clergy, elected officials, service providers and advocates. Their first meeting was in May 2007 and their work was completed in April 2008. The recommendations include short term and longer term funding recommendations, inter-governmental cooperation, advocacy at the state and federal level, and an examination of existing codes and policies that contribute to the local housing crisis and homelessness.

The City of Eugene, Lane County and Springfield have historically worked closely through the Human Services Commission and the Housing Policy Board to address components of the problem. The Blue Ribbon Committee Chair and Vice-Chair appreciate the opportunity to share the final report and recommendations with the Board of Commissioners.



Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee To Finance Homelessness and Housing Programs

Committee Charge: Examine the local impact of homelessness, identify strategies and make recommendations to the City Council related to new funding and finance options.



Photo from Project Homeless Connect, 2008

Report and Recommendations *Adopted April 2, 2008*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Andrea Ortiz, Eugene City Council
Hillary Wylie, Springfield City Council
Faye Stewart, Lane County Board of Commissioners
Susan Ban, ShelterCare
Ron Chase, Sponsors, Inc.
Charles Dalton, Eugene Water and Electric Board
Marcia Edwards, Prudential Real Estate Professionals
Gerry Gaydos, Attorney
Colt Gill, Bethel Public Schools
Tracy Lampman, AIG/VALIC, United Way of Lane County
Father David Lubliner, St. John Maximovitch Serbian Orthodox Church
Hugh Massengill, Eugene Human Rights Commission
Lynne McKinney, Lane Independent Living Alliance
Terry McDonald, St. Vincent dePaul
Michael Milbradt, U.S. Bank
Susan Posner, Lane Forest Products
John VanLandingham, Lane County Legal Aid and Advocacy Center
Clayton Walker, C.W. Walker and Associates
Marieke (Mo) Young, City of Eugene Human Rights Commission
Dan Whelan (ex-officio), Congressman Peter Defazio's office

Staff

Angel Jones, City Manager Pro-Tem,
Executive Goal Lead for Eugene's Homelessness Initiative
Stephanie Jennings, Community Development
Larry Hill, Finance
Twylla Miller, Finance
Mike Sullivan, Community Development
Richie Weinman, Community Development

For more information please contact:

Richie Weinman
City of Eugene Community Development Division
99 W. 10th Avenue
Eugene, Or 97401
541 682-5533
richie.d.weinman@ci.eugene.or.us

SUMMARY

The charge of the Blue Ribbon Committee to Finance Housing and Homeless Programs (BRC) was to *examine the local impact of homelessness, identify strategies and make recommendations to the City Council related to new funding and finance options.*

Through monthly meetings and tours, the committee examined existing services, program gaps and impacts of homelessness. They heard and discussed testimony and learned of the challenges faced by those who are homeless or at risk. The committee considered the impacts on public safety, public education and a variety of public and private institutions and businesses.

The BRC examined an array of financing options and learned that local revenue sources are severely restricted by statewide limitations. The committee was unable to identify a viable long-term and sustainable source that could be realistically implemented in the near future. Instead, the committee opted to recommend a three step approach to address the housing and homelessness problems that are proving to be very costly to the community.

1. Immediate Action:

a. Request funding to develop a comprehensive community analysis that would identify a specific set of goals, strategies and actions to address low-income housing needs and homelessness and provide a roadmap for a community education effort prior to a vote for revenue.

b. Request that the City of Eugene continue existing interim funding for homeless prevention, extended day shelter services (at First Place Family Center and the Eugene Service Station), and transportation assistance.

2. Short Term Action:

a. Based on the recommendations resulting from the comprehensive community analysis (described above in "1.a") the local jurisdictions should pursue the recommended short term funding options which will presumably include a five-year serial levy dedicating funding to affordable housing, transitional housing, homeless prevention and homeless services. The committee recommends that Eugene, Springfield and Lane County each consider this levy, in recognition that housing and homelessness are regional problems. If Lane County is able to enact such a levy it could be an alternative to Eugene and Springfield's measures.

b. Urge each local government to initiate an examination of existing codes and policies that may directly or indirectly contribute to the local housing affordability crisis and to consider these impacts as new codes and policies are proposed.

c. Recommend that local jurisdictions, through the "United Front", advocate for both rule changes and increased federal funding to address low-income housing and homelessness.

3. Reconvene the BRC, or another committee, two to three years after a serial levy takes effect to review options for a permanent funding source. The serial levy's results may

demonstrate to the voters the value of the funding. The committee and the community can then draw upon the track record of the programs funded in order to make a stronger case for long-term funding.

BACKGROUND

In February 2005 Eugene City Council identified “Helping the Homeless in Eugene” as a priority initiative. A cross-departmental staff team, augmented by members of the Human Rights Commission and staff of the Lane County Human Services Commission, studied the problem, reviewed past efforts and visited with groups of homeless people in order to formulate recommendations.

Initial recommendations resulted in the City of Eugene providing temporary funding for homeless prevention programs, transportation assistance, daytime shelters and assistance for homeless youth. The City also initiated staff training and reviewed existing policies. One policy change enabled more homeless people to obtain library cards.

City Council renewed its goals in 2006 and 2007 and expanded the homeless initiative to implement Lane County’s Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. Acknowledging that a significant local funding source is needed to address the problems associated with homelessness, Council empowered Mayor Kitty Piercy to appoint a committee to identify a stable funding source. The first meeting of the newly established Blue Ribbon Committee on Homelessness occurred on May 2, 2007. The committee’s charge was to “examine the local impact of homelessness, identify strategies and make recommendations to the City Council related to new funding and finance options.” The committee was comprised of 20 members representing a spectrum of private, nonprofit, religious, and public interests. It included elected officials from the three local jurisdictions and an ex-officio member of Congressman Peter DeFazio’s staff.

The Blue Ribbon Committee received presentations about the causes and impacts of housing and homelessness from numerous perspectives in order to better understand the problem. There has been a growing intergovernmental and community awareness about these issues over the last twenty years. These responses, while of critical importance, are inadequate to even keep pace with the growing needs. The Human Services Commission and the Housing Policy Board (both include elected officials from each metro jurisdiction) have studied the issue and funded responses. Lane County has been instrumental in providing funding. The Eugene City Council has consistently adopted low-income housing goals during the past 20 years. As a result there is a significant degree of local expertise and prior experience.

Committee presentations included:

Role of United Way and Human Services Commission	Permanent and transitional housing
Housing and Community Services Agency (HACSA) programs	Children, youth, and school impacts
Impacts on police and public works	People with disabilities and supported housing
Crises Assistance Helping Out on the Streets (CAHOOTS)	Tour of low-income housing developments
Public health impacts	Tour of First Place Family Center
	“Community Pulse” (political realities)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Local Homeless People

Homelessness is an acute symptom of poverty resulting in the loss of basic shelter. For most homeless households the predicament is fundamentally a problem related to the supply and affordability of housing. Affordability is driven by both the price of housing and inadequate income to cover local housing costs. In Eugene over 80% of very-low-income renters are “rent burdened” paying more than 30% of their income for housing.

A significant difference exists between the reality of homelessness and the community’s perceptions. The majority of homeless people are never identified or counted, as they are doubled up with friends or relatives until they either stabilize or must move out. Of those who seek services, 95% are from Lane County. Most (84%) local homeless people have a “situational” condition that can be averted with a relatively inexpensive emergency intervention. Many of these people are employed and experienced a temporary loss of income or an extraordinary expense – often due to health care. Others are victims of domestic violence or are military veterans.

In 2007, more than 8,800 unduplicated homeless individuals received services in Lane County. Although the public image of homelessness is a single adult, about a third of homeless people are children. 1,965 homeless children were enrolled in Lane County schools in 2006/2007 -- over 70% in Eugene and Springfield. These children are severely disadvantaged educationally and struggle to learn the basics because they transfer schools frequently, miss classes, suffer with low self-esteem and social isolation, and lack suitable places to do their homework. The results are troubling for society, as illiteracy is the single biggest indicator of future criminal activity.

Chronically Homeless

Some households are in a precarious financial condition because their expenses aren’t covered by a consistent and adequate income. They cycle in and out of “situational homelessness”. If they do not stabilize they can become long-term “chronically homeless”. Chronically homeless people make up about 16% of the local homeless population. Most have challenges including physical impairment, psychiatric disability, and substance abuse, which prevent them from earning enough money to afford housing. Many have multiple diagnoses. Typically, chronically homeless people live in the shadows and try to avoid attention. However, some reflect the common community image of homelessness when they ask for spare change at busy intersections. Chronically homeless people disproportionately cost society much more than those who are situationally homeless because they place significant demands on public health and safety systems. The federal government is encouraging each community to adopt a Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. The federal government focused on this population because the numbers are smaller and the impact is larger. The state of Oregon is also working on its Ten Year Plan. Lane County adopted its plan in November 2006. Communities, including Portland, which have both adopted a plan and targeted resources, are now witnessing notable successes.

Homelessness Trends

Homelessness has steadily increased during the last twenty years, both nationally and locally. The annual one night street and shelter count doesn't fully recognize the increases because the primary locations for counting (shelter spaces) are actually decreasing. Local rental housing is in short supply. Rental vacancy rates are estimated at less than 2%, creating an environment where poor people, often with tarnished credit history, struggle to compete for a limited commodity. During the last ten years housing costs have risen at a much higher rate than incomes. Other factors that lead to homelessness include reductions in funding for mental health programs, cuts and regulation changes in the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), reductions in the Oregon Health Plan, the national health care crisis, and the increase in war veterans and their families.

Impacts of Homelessness

The committee recognizes the many competing financial priorities facing local governments. The status quo is a costly option related to housing and homelessness. The community is directly and indirectly paying the price of homelessness through increased medical and hospital costs, jail costs, public safety impacts (including emergency and non-emergency calls to 9-1-1), impacts on the school system, illegal camping, paramedic responses, and park clean up. The less tangible costs related to human suffering and family dysfunction forecast long-term community impacts as well.

During presentations some committee members were particularly impressed when a typical case of a chronically homeless individual was chronicled. One evening, during a four-hour period, this person generated costly responses that involved the 9-1-1 center, Sacred Heart Emergency Room, CAHOOTS, Police, Buckley House, and possibly park clean-up by Eugene Public Works. It was very similar to the case of "Million Dollar Murray" of Reno, Nevada, who was the subject of a broadly circulated essay by author Malcolm Gladwell. Murray cost programs in Reno at least \$1 million over a ten year period. Other presentation examples included the high costs of homelessness that impact public schools and homeless children, and the challenges and expenses of assisting homeless people with disabilities who try to apply for federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Nationally an increasing number of homeless people are elderly. Many have a disability and most have monthly income from Social Security or Supplemental Security, but it is inadequate to pay for housing and other expenses.

The committee concluded that proactively responding to homelessness would be less expensive and more effective than reacting to the problems associated with homelessness. The indirect total expenses associated with responding to homelessness are significant. Over time, efforts should be made to shift these costs to decreasing the incidence of homelessness by addressing the root of the problem.

We strive to be a community where people feel safe, valued, and welcome. The BRC acknowledges that an intergovernmental approach is ideal for a problem that crosses geographic boundaries. Local goals for sustainability embody the concept that people are able to meet their basic needs. This requires public assistance to offset disadvantages experienced by many of our family members and neighbors. Some people hold a misperception that assistance programs targeted at the homeless population have made Eugene/Springfield a magnet for homeless people

or have in some way allowed people to choose homelessness as a way of life. This is not supported by evidence. Existing assistance programs were actually created as a remedy for complaints from the public related to the impacts of homelessness. The homeless people being served are from this community. Those who become homeless end up in their situation as a last resort, rather than by choice. The committee finds that it will be more cost effective in the long run to end homelessness than to continue treating the symptoms.

Additional details of findings are located in the appendix.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Funding Mechanisms

1) Immediate Action:

a) Develop a comprehensive community analysis that:

- Identifies a specific set of goals, strategies, and actions which would be targeted by a new funding source, and
- Provides a roadmap for educating and informing the community prior to a vote.

b) Continue the current annual appropriations of \$150,000 for homeless prevention and related services.

2) Short Term, limited duration:

Position the housing and homelessness issue for a local option levy ballot measure that directs funding to high priority, highly feasible activities in a four to five year time frame. In the interim, the committee recommends that local jurisdictions, through the "United Front", advocate for both rule changes and increased federal funding to address low-income housing and homelessness.

3) Long-term permanent, sustainable funding source:

The committee recognizes the importance of a long-term stable funding source and concludes that, despite the need, it is neither practical nor feasible to implement at this time. Rather, the BRC or a new committee should be convened after there is a track record from the local option serial levy.

B. Regional Approach

Work toward cooperative regional approaches to address the housing crisis.

C. Changes in local government policies

Examine laws and policies that contribute to the housing and homeless problems.

RECOMMENDATION A: FUNDING MECHANISMS

The Committee recommends three sequential approaches for Eugene City Council as well as Lane County and Springfield to consider: 1) immediate action, 2) short-term, limited duration funding, and 3) long term stable funding.

1) Immediate Action: Develop a comprehensive community analysis to identify a specific set of goals, strategies, and actions to address low income housing and homelessness. A targeted expenditure of \$75,000 would support the development of this plan. In addition, continue the current City of Eugene annual appropriation of \$150,000 for homeless services.

The committee recommends two budgetary actions for 2008.

- a) Fund a comprehensive community analysis that has two purposes.
- The analysis would identify specific goals, strategies, and actions for housing and homelessness that would be funded by a local option levy.
 - The analysis would then provide a road map for community engagement and education that would take place prior to Council placing the proposal on the ballot.

The Blue Ribbon committee helped the community identify what is commonly known and not known about the housing and homelessness crisis. One important conclusion of the BRC's work is that there is much more that still must be learned and a deeper look is needed by professionals who can provide perspectives from other communities. A \$75,000 budget is recommended based on previous City of Eugene experience with the cost of contracting with skilled consultants to work with staff and community members to write a plan. The work would take place over a six to nine month period. Funds would pay for facilitation, consulting assistance, staff time, meeting expenses, and costs of printing and other materials. Existing Eugene housing staff is currently unable to perform these tasks while continuing to meet existing work demands, including the allocation of existing federal funds and managing the contracts that result in the creation of low-income housing units and services. Additionally, because existing work is primarily funded through federal grants sources, it can not be easily allocated for this type of planning.

The product would be modeled after other planning efforts such as Portland's "Bridges to Housing" or the City of Eugene planning efforts, such as the Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategic Plan and the Park Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Comprehensive Plan. The PROS plan, for instance, determined specific proposals for park developments which were subsequently funded by a voter-approved bond measure. If the community is to support a dedicated funding source at the polls, it must be first provided with a blueprint of actions and funding justifications. The proposed strategic plan process recognizes the critical involvement of a wide range of agencies and entities within Eugene as well as the need to activate a community-wide response to homelessness. This process will include the following components:

Comprehensive Community Analysis, Part 1: In-Depth Assessment

The first phase will involve gathering critical information and perspectives in several areas of housing and homelessness. Much of this data is available from service providers but has not been organized and presented in a concise report that can easily inform and educate elected officials and the public. A consultant will likely be used to compile and analyze existing information provided by regional public and private entities. Because housing and homeless problems are regional issues that ideally embrace regional solutions, data from Eugene, Springfield and Lane County must be considered. In addition, the assessment phase will gather and analyze the perspectives of community stakeholder groups. The primary areas for assessment are as follows:

- Needs and perspectives of persons who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness
- Perspectives of the public at large
- Perspectives of services and housing providers

- Impacts of homelessness on the community including other government systems and services, hospitals, schools, etc.
- Existing and potential funding from local, state, federal, and private sources

Comprehensive Community Analysis Part 2: Identification of Critical Gaps and Prioritization for Action

Utilizing the information gathered in the environmental assessment, stakeholders will identify critical gaps and advise on opportunities to address such gaps.

Comprehensive Community Analysis Part 3: Develop Strategies and Actions to Address Priority Issues

Based on the identified priorities, stakeholders will form working groups to develop regional strategies, actions, and specific measurable outcomes. Such actions may be carried out by public entities, selected agencies, or members of the public. These strategies would also guide use of existing funding and identify areas where new funding is necessary.

Future Role for the Blue Ribbon Committee

The Blue Ribbon Committee was created by the City of Eugene as a limited duration committee with a targeted purpose. Once the recommendations are completed the committee's work is completed. The Mayor or City Council may choose to reconvene this committee or appoint a new committee to review the report and potentially advocate for the implementation strategies.

b) Continue the City of Eugene's interim funding allocations that provided for homeless prevention and related services during the last two years:

- i) Prevent homelessness through emergency rent payments or security deposits. This strategy has been demonstrated to be very effective.
- ii) Aid homeless people and the health and safety of the whole community through increased operating hours at the First Place Family Center and the Eugene Service Station.
- iii) Provide transportation assistance for homeless people who find it both expensive and challenging to get to job or benefit appointments, get their children to and from school, or who need transportation for critical medical needs.

Cost: \$150,000 (currently funded as "annual one time" as opposed to an ongoing "base budget" item). A recent quarterly report to City Council on the use of these funds is attached in the appendix.

Summary of Arguments Related to 1) Immediate Action

Pro	Con
Remedies the lack of comprehensive and detailed information required in order to gain public acceptance.	This is a low impact response in the short run compared to the enormity of the problem.

Pro	Con
Study will identify the most cost effective opportunities for assistance.	The currently funded programs (\$150,000) are mostly targeted at homeless prevention rather than the chronically homeless.
Can lead to greater levels of community service coordination.	Staff time will be required to manage contracts for the proposed study.
Additional analysis could lead to greater intergovernmental cooperation and regional partnerships.	Additional analysis could result in a perception or reality of endless study, tangential debate and development of community controversy and opposition.
Responds to a Council priority.	
Information from the study will inform the next HUD Consolidated Plan	

2) Short Term, limited duration: Position this issue for a local option levy ballot measure that directs funding to high priority, highly feasible activities in a five year time frame.

The committee recommends that local jurisdictions place a five-year local option levy on a future ballot, possibly in November, 2010. Despite the critical need for immediate funding, the Blue Ribbon Committee wants to pursue a strategy that will be successful at the polls. This requires the creation of the comprehensive community analysis identified in A-1. The committee discussed a \$5 million annual target. A local option levy allows the voters to examine the results and benefits prior to making a long-term commitment. The Committee views the serial levy as a bridge toward a longer duration and more comprehensive funding source that could be identified later.

The committee recommends that funds from the levy be targeted for prevention and re-housing (25%-35%), temporary housing or emergency shelter (12% - 25%) and new construction and acquisition of low-income housing (50%). A list of suggested uses is provided in the appendix.

A levy is a familiar mechanism and relies on demonstrated public support through a vote of the people. Because housing and homelessness issues directly and indirectly impact the entire community, everyone is a stakeholder. A property tax spreads the support over a broad base of donors.

On average, a \$5 million levy would cost the owner of a median priced home about \$60.00 per year or 16 cents per day. Non-residential property owners would pay 31% of the total tax. A local option levy, although renewable, must be viewed as a temporary source. The revenues cannot be committed to paying for on-going projects. Funds from this source would either be contracted through existing systems, such as the Human Services Commission or through the City's own request for proposal processes.

There are additional options to fund specifically targeted programs. These may include, for example, State funds, bond financing mechanisms, EWEB energy credits, or special consideration of publicly assessed fees. There are a variety of creative and innovative revenue sources that have the potential of raising a limited amount of funding. Many are worth further review during the time that the serial levy is in place. However, none have a significant potential of raising the amount of money that is needed or they may be difficult and expensive to collect. These options can be pursued following additional discussion and study. Federal funding, the most significant source of funds to combat homelessness has been either flat or reduced. The committee recommends Eugene, Springfield and Lane County to advocate for housing and homelessness assistance through the “United Front” efforts.

Examples of funding options that were reviewed by the committee are included in the appendix.

Summary of Arguments Related to 2) Short Term, Limited Duration

Pro	Con
Broad based, rather than narrowly targeted	Serial levy is not well suited for on-going services.
Services would be provided by skilled nonprofit community providers.	There is a risk of creating dependencies on the funds, which creates problems when they terminate.
Would be a source to fund critical capital needs, including land banking.	A local option levy is a property tax, and may be politically unacceptable.
Funding would leverage other public and private resources.	Could conceivably contribute to tax revenue compression in the future.
Levy funding could reduce some existing General Fund expenditures over time, through the implementation of prevention measures.	Requires a public vote.
Funding for some short-term expenditures, including capital projects, would have long-term benefits.	Capital projects that increase the service infra-structure require long-term funding commitments for operations and service revenue.
Would result in educating the public on the needs and solutions related to housing.	There will be administrative expenses associated with selecting services to fund and monitoring contracts

3) Long-term permanent, sustainable funding source: This enables a full range of programs to be funded, including implementation of the Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness.

Ending homelessness and providing affordable housing in the community is the ultimate goal of the Eugene City Council’s initiative. This requires a long-term funding source, in excess of ten

years, that provides funding for on-going needs in addition to emergency responses. The benefits of a long term, stable funding source include the ability to implement long-range planning and to commit support for long-term solutions. This is not possible with a local option levy.

Options for long-term revenue are very limited due to current state laws which severely limit the ability of local jurisdictions to increase taxes. Jurisdictions may consider broad-based options (favored by the committee) such as an income tax or a targeted option such as a tax on a particular commodity (provided it is legally taxable under state law). Both options typically face fierce opposition from tax opponents on principle, regardless of what public benefit the funding will be used for.

The Committee reviewed a list of alternative funding options, including ideas presented by staff and ideas raised by members or the community. Some options, such as the transient room tax have a dedicated use due to state law. A car rental tax is currently collected by the County and can be used for general purposes of government. However, most cars are rented at the airport, which is outside City limits. Therefore the potential tax is only available to Lane County and not available to Eugene or Springfield. Other options may be complicated or expensive to collect or would have an inadequate revenue potential.

The committee was unable to identify a satisfactory and feasible long-term funding source. If local jurisdictions identify a new revenue sources for the general purpose of government, they should consider dedicating a portion of it to this initiative. Likewise, an additional choice is to fund housing and homeless activities through the current budget by reallocating general fund priorities.

Any long-term, dedicated, funding source for this initiative would be most effective if it could be implemented county-wide or at least in the entire metropolitan area.

Summary of Arguments Related to 3) Long-term permanent, sustainable funding source

Pro	Con
Adequate funding, over time, to address a broad range of needs.	There is currently no comprehensive community analysis blueprint in place to guide revenue expenditures.
Unlike the limitations of a local option levy, it can address a broad range of needs, including long term support for projects.	Politically challenging to pass a measure. Broad based options, such as an income tax have failed in the past. Targeted options historically Narrow options
Capable of implementing the Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness	Public support is uncertain. There is a need to build consensus through community education.
Significant opportunity to provide local match to leverage other funds	The public generally dislikes new taxes. For instance, one targeted to a specific commodity usually stimulates a well-funded opposition from the industry being

Pro	Con
Source will grow as community needs increase	targeted by the tax.

RECOMMENDATION B. REGIONAL APPROACH

One plan, three jurisdictions

The Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee was appointed by Eugene and specifically advises the City of Eugene while recommending to all local governments. This committee includes a Lane County Commissioner and a Springfield City Councilor because housing and homeless issues have regional importance.

The City of Eugene has close intergovernmental partnerships with Lane County and Springfield through the Human Services Commission and the Housing Policy Board. Eugene and Springfield have formed a consortium to receive federal HOME funds. Eugene worked closely with Lane County in developing a Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness.

The Blue Ribbon Committee encourages Lane County and Springfield to work closely with Eugene to provide similar funding levels for housing and homelessness or place a similar initiatives on their respective ballots at the same time. All three jurisdictions could then benefit from increased investment and a single voter education effort. If Lane County approved a funding source it would raise revenue from Eugene and Springfield residents, possibly negating the need for specific funding in those cities.

The Blue Ribbon Committee also recommends that each jurisdiction advocate for improved legislation and funding to address these issues. This can be accomplished in the State of Oregon by joining the "Housing Alliance" and at the federal level through the "United Front" process.

RECOMMENDATION C. CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Review the impacts of existing regulations

The Blue Ribbon Committee is concerned about unintended consequences associated with existing laws and policies. Many regulations that were adopted to respond to important community needs indirectly contribute to the housing and homelessness crisis. These include codes related to land use, growth management, sustainability and livability. It may be that improved "livability" for some is accomplished through limited housing options for those with fewer resources.

Locally, the Blue Ribbon Committee recommends that each jurisdiction ensure that they are carefully considering the impacts on low-income households and potential homelessness as part of ongoing planning efforts. For instance, in Eugene there are potential impacts associated with the minor code amendment, in-fill and opportunity siting processes. Jurisdictions are encouraged to appoint a special task force that can examine local codes with regard to affordable housing and homelessness and make recommendations to Planning Commissions or elected officials.

APPENDIX

Table of Contents

Scenario: Targeting Needs and Assistance

Revenue Options

Committee's Meeting Schedule

Eugene City Council's Homelessness Goal Quarterly Report

Written Comments Submitted by Committee Members

Scenario: Targeting Needs and Assistance

The following is a scenario of an annual allocation of \$5 million to address housing and homeless needs.

A program of \$5 million per year for five years is not enough to solve homelessness – a problem that has been steadily growing for over 25 years. However, it is enough to demonstrate to the community that there are viable responses that will decrease the number of homeless people, save the community money and improve the quality of life for our relatives and neighbors.

The committee acknowledges that specifying an annual financial target is challenging because there are many unmet needs. On one hand, the total local cost to fully address the problem could be in the hundreds of millions of dollars. On the other hand, there is a substantial community cost to not addressing the issue. The recommended demonstration period enables systems to be created, pilot projects to be funded, and data to be collected in order to evaluate effectiveness, including money saved over time, as a result of this investment. The committee believes that allocating funds now will have the dual benefits of saving money later and meeting the critical needs of people now. The committee recommends the following as a guideline for the allocation of funds and also recognizes that there may be unknown future opportunities to pursue based on either emerging needs, special federal or state grants or matching funds.

I. PREVENTION AND RE-HOUSING

MAINTAINING PEOPLE IN THEIR OWN HOMES 25% -35% OF THE TOTAL

a. Emergency Assistance

Support funding for emergency assistance to prevent evictions caused by a healthcare emergency, temporary job loss, utility bill, automobile breakdown or an acute need for home repair or disability accommodation. Assisting people to remain in their home is the most effective way to fight homelessness because it prevents homelessness from initially occurring.

For those with special needs including, youth, domestic violence victims, people exiting treatment programs, and people with disabilities extraordinary support is needed. This includes re-housing, vocational training and case management. It may also include fostering special contracts with landlords to reserve rental housing for targeted populations. Prevention funding may also assist people with disabilities to remain housed while awaiting a determination for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

*Proposed funding: \$500,000
400 households receive emergency payments to prevent evictions and case management to support long-term success.*

Proposed special- needs funding: \$700,000

375 households receive preventative supportive services and case management in order to stabilize in permanent housing.

b. Re-housing

The speed with which a newly homeless person becomes re-housed can be instrumental in the long-term cost and impact. This funding enables quick re-housing of situationally homeless households by providing emergency payments to cover leasing and move-in costs (e.g. first and last month rent, security deposit). Once homelessness occurs a cascade of problems emerge and it becomes very costly (financially and emotionally) to become stably housed again.

Proposed funding: \$500,000

400 households receive emergency payments to prevent evictions and case management to support long-term success.

II. TEMPORARY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES
*RESPONSES FOR PEOPLE IN CRISIS
12% - 20% OF THE TOTAL*

a. Emergency Shelter

Respond to the critical need for emergency shelter for people who are currently homeless.

A minority of members strongly expressed a position favoring a new, publicly funded, emergency shelter for adults. These members raised concerns that the Eugene Mission is unable or unwilling to serve important segments of the population, including people with physical and psychiatric disabilities and those unwilling to participate in the religious chapel requirements. The Eugene Mission is not always a safe place for those with a psychiatric disability and isn't accessible for many people with mobility challenges.

The argument in favor of a new shelter was countered by a viewpoint that emergency shelter is both expensive to operate and not cost effective in terms of long-term outcomes, when compared to other responses to homelessness. New emergency shelters are very difficult and expensive to site. For example, a special land use zone was created for the Eugene Mission when it relocated to its current location in 1967. Emergency shelters typically cannot expect any rental income, so they must have either a debt-free facility or a long-term funding stream to retire the debt. Either scenario presents an enormous challenge.

A shelter that provides services ranging from meals, food, showers, job assistance, and case management is estimated to cost as little as \$10,000 per year per bed for some populations and over \$24,000 per bed for others – depending on a number of factors including the economy of scale and generally assuming a debt-free facility. The higher the degree of services, the more likely the possibility of positive outcomes – as measured by people obtaining and succeeding in housing.

There is a continuum of services and options in the community. With increased case management, households could move directly from homelessness into permanent housing

(Housing First model) and bypass emergency shelter. The long-term success rate for this type of transitional housing is near 90%.

Because of the expense and the belief that the Housing First model is more effective, the majority of committee members did not recommend a new emergency group shelter based on the information available at this time. An additional consideration of shelters may be considered in the as an element of the recommended comprehensive community analysis

Proposed Funding: \$350,000

Expand existing shelter capacity, including services and case management to serve 10 households per night. Funds could also support emergency motel vouchers.

b. Day programs

Day programs such as First Place Family Center, New Roads, and Eugene Service Station offer guidance, hope, support, and critical services for homeless residents. They provide a safe place for respite and an alternative to streets and parks. At First Place, affordable licensed childcare is a significant service. Current funding is not keeping up with inflation and demand and is augmented by temporary Eugene funding.

Proposed Funding: \$170,000

Serve 200 people per day by retaining and improving existing day programs and improve long-term outcomes through expanded case management and training programs.

c. Transportation assistance

Many lower income and homeless people face a significant barrier as they struggle to get their children to school or to show up for critical medical or service appointments. They do not have cars and cannot afford the cost of public transportation. With temporary funding, Eugene currently supports a program that enables social service providers to purchase bus tokens at a deep discount. They provide the tokens to their clients. The Committee recommends this program be continued and expanded.

Proposed Funding: \$80,000

Provide transportation assistance for 300,000 trips annually.

d. Emergency response, sobering and detoxification services

A paradox is that people who need treatment for alcohol or drug dependencies often must detox and be sober in order to participate. The Buckley House sobering station and detoxification programs are critical to the community's public safety system. Its ongoing funding is tenuous and there is demand for increased services.

Nationally there is growing evidence that the Housing First model, which can provide "wet," housing for people who are alcohol or drug dependent, works successfully. This results in long-term positive outcomes that are both better for the person and much less expensive for the community. Because people will not cure their addictions while homeless, they must have affordable housing – preferably with support services.

Proposed Funding: \$110,000

Expand capacity at Buckley House to serve 3 additional people per night for detoxification, for a total of 14 beds.

III. HOUSING

CREATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING, HOUSING FOR THOSE WHO NEED SERVICES, AND "HOUSING FIRST"

50% OF THE TOTAL

To succeed in school, work, and life people need to have a place to call home. Many hardworking people do not earn enough money to pay for housing. Some people, due to a disability, are physically unable to fully support themselves. Others, including many who receive Social Security Disability benefits, need assistance to succeed in housing because they are unable to qualify for the medical and mental health services that support their stability.

In recent years housing costs have increased at twice the rate as wages. The three legs of sustainability are: *social equity, economic sustainability and environmental sustainability*. In response to the social equity leg and the community needs, the backbone of efforts to address homelessness must be the addition of housing that is affordable for lower-income households. This involves acquiring land and supporting new construction and also acquiring existing housing. Some of this housing must be tied to either temporary or permanent services that will enable the residents to succeed. There is a continuum of housing needs. Some households simply need an affordable place to live. Others require increasing levels of case management or services in order to succeed.

Detail of Findings

A. Need and impacts on people experiencing poverty and homelessness

1. During the course of a year, over 7,600 unduplicated homeless individuals receive services in Lane County.
2. 2,296 homeless people were specifically counted during a Lane County one-night homeless census on January 25, 2007.
3. 1,906 homeless children were enrolled in Lane County schools in 2006. About half were in Eugene. 1,100 homeless and runaway youth received services from Looking Glass in 2005-06. Homeless children, if they are in school, frequently miss many school days and move from one school to another. They struggle with basic education. Illiteracy is the single biggest predictor of adult criminal activity. Success in school and life is tied to a stable home.
4. 95% of local homeless people who receive any type of services are from our community.
5. 21% of Eugene residents are living in poverty (over 30,000 people).

6. 20% of Lane County households have received food assistance from Food for Lane County in 2007. Children make up nearly half of those assisted.
7. Over 6,000 Lane County households received energy assistance last year. 35% of EWEB's customers qualify.
8. 20,000 area households are income eligible for subsidized housing, according to the 2000 census. About 4,500 actually receive assistance. Those who are not assisted are typically renters who are "rent burdened" because they pay over 30% of their monthly income for housing costs. 75% of low-income renters are cost burdened.
9. Our community is experiencing a severe housing crisis. Vacancy rates are below 2%, leaving lower income households to compete in an environment where demand exceeds supply. Families with children and people with disabilities particularly struggle. Once people lose their housing they are faced with significant challenges in order to become re-housed.
10. Homelessness is an extreme form of poverty. It damages lives, breaks up families and is very costly for the whole community as it impacts public safety, public health, and public education.
11. People with both physical and mental disabilities, even when employed, are frequently unable to earn an adequate wage to afford housing. Furthermore, if their income increases they may lose benefits or access to healthcare.
12. For people eligible for federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the application process is daunting, generally requires an advocate, and typically takes two or more years before any assistance is received. 90% of applicants are rejected on their first attempt.

B. Causes of poverty and homelessness

1. Housing costs have increased at about twice the rate as incomes during the last decade.
2. Households are forced to make challenging spending decisions when there isn't enough money for shelter, food, healthcare and other critical needs.
3. A household healthcare crisis is a leading cause of homelessness. Cutbacks in the Oregon Health Plan contribute to the problem. Health care problems result in 52% of all bankruptcies in America.
4. Two-thirds of Eugene renters and one-third of Eugene homeowners are experiencing a hardship. Low vacancy rates and rising rents and home prices will contribute to an even greater need for affordable housing.
5. Public funding for assistance services of all kinds continues to decrease nationally. Since 1980, the federal government has reduced Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) funding by 87%.

6. "Deinstitutionalization" resulted in closed hospitals and treatment facilities and caused a migration to cities of adults with disabilities. Funding for localized group homes, supported housing, case management and other treatment facilities proved to be inadequate.
7. Women and children who are victims of domestic violence often have no resources independent from the batterer. With small children and limited job experience, many women find it difficult to support and independent and safe life in the community.
8. Locally, 84% of homeless households are "situationally" homeless as opposed to long-term "chronically" homeless. They are often in trouble because of a one-time financial emergency. Prevention mechanisms are very cost-effective and successful for this population.
9. Chronically homeless people typically have one or more disabilities. Of those able to work, few are able to earn enough money to afford housing and they often require supportive services in order to succeed.

C. Impacts on the community

1. The shortage of housing that is affordable for low-income people negatively impacts the whole community.
2. Homeless people frequently use the emergency room for primary medical care. The costs for their services are indirectly passed on to the community. The average daily cost of an emergency room visit is \$362.00.
3. Homelessness often results in a mental health crisis. The average daily cost at Sacred Heart Hospital's Johnson Unit (p̄sychiatric) is \$858.00 and the average stay is 7-10 days. The costs of this treatment are indirectly passed on to the community. People in stable housing are less likely to experience a crisis. Those in supportive housing, which can be provided for about \$850.00 per month, are less likely to need hospitalization.
4. The average daily cost for one person at the Lane County jail is \$359.00, including shelter, food, arrest, booking and custody.
5. All school children in a class are impacted by the presence of homeless children. Homeless children have special needs and when compared to other students they command a disproportionate amount of attention from teachers and staff.
6. The success of children, in school and life, is tied to having a stable home.
7. Children who miss classes or frequently move from school to school struggle to learn the basics. Illiteracy is the single greatest predictor of future criminal behavior.
8. The status quo is a costly option. The community is directly and indirectly paying the price of homelessness through increased medical and hospital costs, jail costs, public safety impacts

(including emergency and non-emergency calls to 9-1-1), illegal camping, paramedic responses, and park clean up.

Revenue Options Reviewed by the Committee

REVENUE OPTION	DESCRIPTION OF TAX	POTENTIAL ANNUAL YIELD
Admission Tax	An excise tax on the sales price of admission to an event or performance.	A 1% tax on movie and Hult Center tickets, video and DVD rental charges, and golf and bowling fees is estimated to yield \$175,000 in 2002.
Business/Corporate Income Tax	A flat or graduated tax based on business net income earned within the City; a subset of this tax could be based on net corporate income earned within the City.	A 1% tax on the income of corporations doing business in Eugene would generate approximately \$2.7 million in FY03. A 10% State corporate income tax surcharge would generate approximately \$1.8 million in FY03.
Business License Fee	A fee on businesses for the privilege of operating within the City. Usually a set dollar amount.	Based on Oregon Employment Department records, there are roughly 5,800 businesses registered in Eugene area zip codes. Based on Salem's proposed fee schedule and estimate of business size distribution, a business registration tax would generate an estimated \$1.4 million per year in Eugene in 2002.
Employer Per Capita Tax	A business privilege tax based upon the number of persons employed in the City.	Gross Revenue Generation per \$10 Per-Capita Tax is approximately \$730,000.
General Fund Allocation	Funding could be provided through the City of Eugene budget process to homelessness and housing issues, prioritized against other competing needs.	Would vary.
General Sales Tax	A tax on the retail sales of goods and services (usually a percentage), to be collected at the point of sale.	Based on 2001 data, a 1% sales tax would generate approximately \$19.5 million.
Gross Receipts Tax	A flat or variable tax on the gross income of all companies engaging in business in the City.	A City gross receipts tax of .02% would have raised an estimated \$2 million in calendar year 2001. This estimate is based on taxing all businesses and therefore may need to be reduced for any exempted businesses.
New Construction Fee	A flat fee or percentage charge on new construction activity.	In 2001, a 10% surcharge on building permit fees would generate \$308,000.
Payroll Tax	A tax on wages and salaries earned within the City.	The approximate private payroll figure would be \$2.4 billion. With a 0.1% payroll tax on private employers, gross revenue would be approximately \$2.4 million.
Personal Income Tax	A tax on earned and unearned income received by residents of Eugene and non-residents earning income in Eugene.	In 2001: \$31 million with 1% tax on Adjusted Gross Income or \$1.8 million with 1% surcharge on State Income Tax
Property Taxes	A temporary local option levy or general obligation bonds	Varies
Real Estate Transfer Tax	A fee is collected when taxable real estate is sold; could be a flat fee or a percentage.	Preempted by state law.
Restaurant Tax	An excise tax collected at restaurant facilities.	Based on estimates developed for the 1993 proposed restaurant tax and assuming 6% average growth, a restaurant tax would generate approximately \$2.3 million in 2001.
Sales Tax on Selected Items	A tax on the retail sales of select goods and services (usually a percentage), to be collected at the point of sale.	Would vary depending upon the goods and services selected as the tax base.
Utility Consumption Tax	A utility bill surcharge to be paid by electrical, natural gas, and cable television utility customers in Eugene	In 2001, a .2% tax rate would generate approximately \$2 million.

Blue Ribbon Committee on Financing for Homelessness Meeting Schedule

Committee Charge: Examine the local impact of homelessness, identify strategies and make recommendations to the City Council related to new funding and finance options."

MONTH	TOPIC
May 2	1) <u>Welcome and Committee Charge – Mayor Piercy</u> 2) <u>Introductions and ground rules</u> 3) <u>Presentation: Why is homelessness an issue in Eugene?</u> 4) <u>Identifying questions, concerns, requests for information</u>
June 6	1. <u>Current funding processes</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Priscilla Gould, United Way of Lane County• Steve Manela and Pearl Wolfe, Human Services Commission (HSC)• Mike White, Housing and Community Services Agency (HACSA)• Stephanie Jennings, City of Eugene 2. <u>Overview of financing alternatives</u> City of Eugene Finance Division
July 2	1. <u>City Impacts</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Police, Lt. Carolyn McDermed• Michelle Mortensen, PSO• Kevin Finney, Public Works• CAHOOTS, David Zeiss, White Bird Clinic 2. <u>Public Health Impacts</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paul Wagner, Sacred Heart E.R.• Bob Dritz, White Bird Clinic (not confirmed) III. <u>Subcommittee visits (subcommittees will meet in July)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1) Homeless youth issues 2) homeless adult issues• 3) transitional and permanent housing issues
August 2	<u>Finance Subcommittee</u>

MONTH	TOPIC
September 5	<p><u>1. Permanent and Transitional Housing</u> Existing Tools, current capacity, barriers to increasing productions Norton Cabell, HPB Susan Ban, ShelterCare Terry McDonald, SVDP Jim McCoy, HACSA</p>
September 5 (cont)	<p><u>2. Reports and insights from site visits and tours</u> <u>3. Report from Finance Committee</u> <u>4. Selecting a date for a second meeting in October</u></p>
October 3	<p><u>2. Community Pulse</u> Ed Weeks, U of O Jenny Ulum Janet Byrd, Portland</p> <p><u>3. Report from Finance Subcommittee</u> Criteria for selecting a funding source</p>
November 7	<p><u>1. Children, Youth and Special Populations Including impacts on schools and challenges for people with disabilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Lessons from Portland and other Oregon communities</u> • <u>Creative financing options for housing</u> <p><u>Recommendations: Priority activities to be prioritized for funding</u></p>
December 5	<p><u>Review of Draft Report</u> Financing Options – Deliberations</p>
February 6, 2008	<p><u>Review of Draft Report</u></p>
April 2	<p><u>Review of Draft Report</u></p>

CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY ISSUE STATUS REPORT



Develop a Strategy to Help the Homeless in Eugene

Contact: Angel Jones, City Manager Pro Tem, 682-5336
Richie Weinman, Staff Lead, 682-5533

Reporting period: October – December 2007

DESCRIPTION

Eight strategic issues were identified at the February 2005 retreat of the City of Eugene's Mayor, City Council, and Executive Managers. One strategic issue was to "Develop a strategy to help the homeless in Eugene." Council wanted to determine the City's future role in addressing this complex, international issue. The inter-departmental Homelessness Action Planning Team worked to develop a three- to five-year action plan. This team was expanded to include staff from the Lane County Human Services Commission and representatives of the City's Human Rights Commission. Mayor Piercy frequently attended the meetings. Council reviewed this plan on two occasions in 2005 (July 13 and November 30) and approved the work plan. Council has since reaffirmed this goal for 2006 and 2007.

On May 17, 2006, Council reviewed options to address homelessness. Following a recommendation to the Budget Committee, council approved a series of "one-time" appropriations and provided direction on the next steps for stable, sustainable funding.

OUTCOMES

Since homelessness has the potential to touch every resident and neighborhood within the City, council acknowledged staff's expanded definition of "the homeless" to include community members who are "at risk" of becoming homeless because they cannot afford food and shelter. Homelessness is not isolated to Eugene; therefore, the City of Eugene needs a great deal of public assistance, especially from Lane County, the State of Oregon, and the Federal Government. The following goals and actions were taken by the City's staff team in order to make recommendations to the City Council:

1. Examined ways to more efficiently deliver services with existing resources based on the evaluation of City service delivery to homeless/at risk populations.
Result: Beginning in 2005, service delivery improvements include providing library cards to homeless people and improving the way the City addresses homeless camping complaints.

2. Assembled community stakeholders and formed a "collaborative base" to identify the most critical areas of need.

Result: Ongoing collaboration with stakeholders which include, but are not limited to, homeless/at-risk community members, City & County staff, the Eugene Human Rights Commission, Housing Policy Board, Human Services Commission, Commission on Children and Families, elected officials, past and present service providers, and business owners.

3. Engaged homeless/at risk community members—listened to their views, identified their needs, and determined what enhancements they felt would provide the greatest benefit.

Result: Completed in 2005 and 2006 by the staff team and again by the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee.

4. Trained City staff on issues relating to homeless/at risk community members.

Result: Total attendance at staff trainings on homelessness has now exceeded 300 with 34 on the wait list for the next training. More detailed training is offered for City employees and work groups who are more likely to have frequent, daily interaction with homeless/at risk persons.

5. Prioritized the issues of most critical need and/or areas where the City and the "collaborative base" of partners can deliver the most effective assistance, taking into account discretionary funding and the potential to re-deploy resources to higher priority areas.

Result: Completed by staff team and reviewed by City Council. Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee is expected to recommend a more comprehensive study of these issues.

6. The staff team presented the highest priority action items to the Mayor and City Council, and requested that Council inform the City Manager as to which options should be implemented.

Result: Completed in May 2007

7. Assigned appropriate City staff and other applicable resources to short- and long-term options approved by the Mayor and City Council.

Result: Ongoing

RECOMMENDATION

Through the budget process, Eugene allocated \$150,000 to address homelessness in three different categories: 1) funds for prevention, 2) transportation assistance, and 3) day services for homeless people. Transportation assistance is allocated over a two-year period.

Prevention

The following table summarizes the results of prevention allocations since July 1, 2007.

Note: Fewer services occurred in the first quarter, because funds were not contracted until September 18, 2007.

PROVIDER	HOUSEHOLDS SERVED	AMOUNT SPENT	AVG. SPENT PER CLIENT	YTD SERVED	YTD AVERAGE
SHELTERCARE	17	\$4,914	\$289	24	\$366
ST. VINCENT	18	\$8,310	\$462	22	\$455
CATHOLIC CS	11	\$5,177	\$345	16	\$421
LOOK. GLASS	7	\$3,156	\$450	14	\$365
TOTAL	53	\$21,557	\$406	76	\$415

Examples of assistance:

- During the same month, a 17-year-old female's rent was raised and hours cut at work. She received assistance during the next month, which gave her enough time to secure a better paying job with more hours.
- A disabled senior woman, who lives on a fixed income of \$265 a month on Social Security, had been living with her young adult son. He moved to Florida to seek better career options and left her on her own. He was paying most of the rent and intended to return to live with his mom because he knew she couldn't manage financially on her own. The family assistance broke down, and City funds helped her with her rent and case workers helped her set goals. One of her goals was to be in low-income housing that was based on her income. She was given lists of places to try, and about a week later, secured a place based on her income. She is very happy that she does not have to depend on her son.
- A 54-year-old Veteran, who suffers with Hepatitis-C, must start chemotherapy, which can last up to a year. He will be very sick for quite awhile. His 27-year-old daughter moved in to help take care of him. In January, she will begin going to college and, with assistance of financial aid, will pay the rent until his VA disability and VA pension start in February or March. City funds provided \$345 for the one month they needed help to bridge a financial gap. This stabilized the household and prevented eviction.

- An Elderly woman's debit card was stolen causing her to get behind in her rent. This situation was verified by her bank. She was provided bridge funding to pay her rent until the credit card situation was resolved.
- A woman had a two-week layoff at work. She works full time but got behind on all bills. City funding provided the financial assistance necessary.
- A client with epilepsy had to miss work because of repeated seizures. The client is now back to work but got behind in rent and couldn't catch up. City funding provided emergency assistance.
- A client whose car broke down, used his rent money for vehicle repair because the vehicle was critical to keeping job. Emergency funds prevented eviction.

Transportation Assistance

LTD provided half-price bus tokens through City of Eugene funding through ten agencies and through 23 separate programs that serve homeless people. The total allocated by LTD:

October 2007	\$2,009
November 2007	\$2,702
December 2007	\$2,234
2007 Full-Year Total	\$25,710

Day Services

City of Eugene funding enabled First Place Family Center to increase its summer and weekend hours and the Eugene Service Station to operate in the evening and on weekends.

CHALLENGES

Homelessness impacts the community in numerous ways and the homeless population is as diverse as the city itself. There are numerous approaches to addressing the problem. Among them are prevention, affordable housing, and services for homeless people of all ages and conditions. The homeless problem has increased over the last 25 years. This can be attributed to severe reductions in funding of various programs and to wages failing to keep up with housing prices. A close-to-home example of cuts includes the City's Community Development Block Grant which has experienced a 20 percent reduction over the last six years (a number that is even more significant if inflation is factored in). Solving the homeless problem requires a combination of creativity and funding.

The Federal Government is focusing financial efforts on the ten percent of people nationally who meet HUD's narrow definition of "chronically homeless" (chronically homeless is actually 16 percent of Lane County's homeless population). While it is true that this 16 percent often costs the various systems significant resources, the ability to help the 84 percent of situational homeless remains a crisis. If left unassisted, many are likely to become chronically homeless.

Lane County's budget crisis, although mostly averted in 2007, could still result in widespread and significant budget cuts to providers of services in 2008 and beyond. Day and night shelter, sobering and detox, and other critical treatment programs could either close or be curtailed. These cuts will impact public health and safety in Eugene. In addition, a Federal law now limits households to five years of benefits under the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. [This program used to be known as "welfare".] For the first time, the five-year window is closing for many households. This will have serious repercussions.

INTERMEDIATE MEASURES

Identify and Track:

- The number of meetings with homeless community members, service providers, homeless advocates, City and County commissions and other key stakeholders to determine and prioritize gaps and needs.
- The amount of City budgets allocated to programs that directly help the homeless.
- The number of City staff who have completed training around interaction with homeless community members.

Highlights of the quarter

On June 25, 2007, just prior to the quarter, Council reviewed the homelessness goal, and members expressed support for both the measurable outcomes that have been achieved and the continued direction for the coming year.

The Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee for Financing the Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness has been the priority activity of the quarter.

Key meetings and events this quarter:

Homeless Action Planning Team (staff)	1 meeting
Blue Ribbon Committee	
2 meetings	
Blue Ribbon Steering committee	2
meetings	

FINAL OUTCOME MEASURES

Community indicators – measures which reflect the complexity of this issue require the support of many organizations and individuals in addition to the City:

- Number of beds available to homeless community members, by type of person/group served (youth/singles/family).

City Measures – measures that are mainly or wholly controlled by City staff or City elected officials.

- Amount of City budget authority allocated to programs that directly help the homeless, including those dollars allocated to service providers.
- Number of City staff who have completed training around interaction with homeless community members.
- Number of trainings and other actions undertaken by the City to educate and address homelessness and understanding of homelessness.
- Number of policies changed to benefit homeless people in Eugene.

Next Steps

The “Blue Ribbon Committee” will complete its work during the first quarter of 2008. The work plan involves developing an understanding of the complexity of issues followed by consideration of funding options. Council can then consider the recommendations and determine next steps related to funding.

Committee members have discovered that the depth and complexity of needs are significant, and that narrowing the focus or identifying the best approach to finding solutions is challenging. Additionally, the committee has met with experts who advise that the public will likely respond more favorably to discussions of “housing needs” rather than “homelessness”. One expert compared the terms to “poor” and “broke.” Housing needs can be interpreted as a temporary problem while homelessness creates images of permanence.

Project Homeless Connect is being planned for February 7, 2008 at the Lane County Fairgrounds/Events Center. The organizing team is now meeting regularly to organize this event. More information is available at: www.homelessconnect.org. The Honorary Chairs for the upcoming event are Mayor Piercy, Mayor Leiken, Commissioner Stewart and 2008 United Way Chair, Tracy Lampman.

Comments Submitted by Committee Members

Hugh Massengill:

I cannot support this proposal. As indicated by the person presenting it to the Blue Ribbon Committee (John), it deliberately will not help single people, and it will deliberately not be used to increase emergency shelter for the greatest mass of the chronically homeless; single male adults. The emergency shelter described is mostly for families.

If my "bad old days" were to come back, there is very little in this that would be of help to me. There is very little in this that would have helped the hundreds of single men who lived with me at the Mission. This allows the Mission to be the de-Facto city shelter. It allows city police to cite/arrest homeless people for the "crime" of being homeless and sleeping on the street or in the park, even though they have no place to go. It allows the city/police to force homeless single people to live in the Mission or be arrested.

It is, in effect, Lane County's 10 year plan to end chronic homelessness, and Lane County will be doing nothing to help the very poor single adults. I think it might be better to do nothing and stay frustrated than pretend to do something that really won't help the great mass of homeless. It hinges on waiting two years and getting the voters to go for a serial levy, and that is iffy at best.

I really do see the problems in attacking the problem in a more substantive way.

Still, this reads as if it will help those on the street corners or sleeping in parks, but in truth, it will do little if anything in that regard. So, with the greatest of respect for those who drew this up, and with the greatest of respect for the others around the table, I cannot support it.

John VanLandingham

I write to respond to Hugh regarding the issue of more shelter for homeless single adults (primarily men) in our Blue Ribbon Committee Report.

I do this for the (hoped-for) benefit of those who were not able to attend our last meeting, on April 2. At that meeting, Hugh argued for more single adult shelter, and I argued against. A motion to amend the report to call for more shelter failed on a 5 to 5 vote. (To be specific, something lawyers are often loathe to do, the motion was to remove a statement in the report providing that the majority of the committee does not support more shelter.)

Before I describe my reasons for opposing that amendment let me note that I very much appreciate Hugh's gentle persistence in advocating for more shelter.

Here is why I oppose calling for more emergency shelter for singles in our report:

1. To be blunt, more shelter is not going to happen, and we would mislead readers and voters were we to suggest that it is. I don't say that because I think that shelter is a bad idea. I've advocated for increased shelter many times over my 30 years of doing this work. I say that

because we do not have the money -- even with our proposed new funding -- or the will to provide more shelter.

a. Emergency shelter is very expensive, because it has to be staffed 24/7. As a reflection of this, we have actually decreased our existing emergency shelter units for families over the past 20 years because we cannot pay to operate the units.

b. Emergency shelter is incredibly difficult to site, especially for single men. I believe that we could not site the Mission in this community if it had to move from its current location under the Chambers overpass.

There are others in our group who know this subject better than I, such as Ron Chase. But I have been involved in 4 very contentious efforts to site homeless shelters in Eugene, the "homeless moms" of the old Jefferson Pool site (which led to the Opportunity Shelter, now run as a day access center by SVDP for homeless families) and 3 tries over 3 years to site a homeless campground. None were successful except on a temporary basis; we could not find an acceptable permanent site.

c. I understand the concerns about the Eugene Mission -- about the lack of accessibility, the forced religion, the "go-to-the-Mission-or-be-arrested" attitude of some police, the separation of teenage boys from their mothers. But I suggest to you that Eugene voters will not support a tax to provide something that the Mission provides with no taxpayer support.

2. So, given my assumption that we do not now and will not ever have enough money to both fund more shelter and build new transitional and permanent affordable housing units, I strongly support putting our limited funding into preventive services -- to help people, including single adults, not become homeless -- and into new transitional or permanent affordable housing units, and not into more shelter.

a. If we don't, we will only be able to keep providing shelter. We will never make any headway on meeting the need for more affordable housing.

b. Shelter is not the answer for homeless people, be they families or singles. Homeless people don't want emergency shelter, living in a dorm-like setting with dozens of other people. They want a home, a private space, just like everyone else.

c. Shelter is also not the answer for helping homeless people get and succeed with alcohol and drug treatment. Those services are not going to work well in a shelter setting. Richie recently circulated the Portland article about Portland's version of Million Dollar Murray. The article described the success of helping that "Murray" go into detox, and then stay clean and sober -- in a permanent housing unit, not in a shelter.

Finally, while I accept that our report, as it stands, lacks a call for more emergency shelter, it is unfair to say that it does nothing for homeless people, families or singles. We have had some significant success recently with prevention programs -- helping people avoid evictions. Prevention helps singles as well as families. And we have built new apartments for single adults, and can and should build more. Prevention and new housing are successes. But we need more money to do both.

Is this a difficult choice? Yes, perhaps even unfair. But it's the choice we've got. Remember that our overall strategy in the report is to make a modest proposal for taxpayer support and then show the voters that we can use their money effectively and efficiently, so that they will trust us

with their money. We can't make that argument by putting all or most of the money into more shelter. But if we can succeed with this strategy, then we can seek support for more money, and do more with it, and make some headway.

Will this strategy take time? Yes. It won't solve the problem in 1 or 2 or even 5 years. But let me remind you that some of us have been working on this issue for 20 years or more. Our last shot at getting significant public money in Eugene was more than 10 years ago. The time before that was in 1989. If we fail now, it will be a long time before we get another chance.

Is this the best solution? No. Is it the best possible solution, the solution most likely to succeed with the voters and to produce positive change? I think yes.

Mo Young:

I'm not comfortable supporting the committee's recommendations. I appreciate the need for affordable housing in the Eugene area, but the proposed plan addresses only a portion of the larger issue. Eugene needs to have a secular emergency shelter. We are not effectively serving homeless people who are single. Also, I am not confident that a tax levy will pass and I would like to see a plan that does not depend on the will of the tax payers.

Ron Chase:

Virtually every word that Hugh wrote I have spoken at some point over the past 20 years, and I am in total agreement with Hugh's condemnation of how single homeless people are treated and how little our efforts will change that even in the distant future. This will be true even if our efforts are successful and we do pass a serial levy dedicated to developing housing and funding homeless services and prevention. Despite the fact that some of the proposed services will provide some benefit to homeless single people, it will not alter the basic fact that they are offered a Hobson's choice when confronted by law enforcement for sleeping or camping illegally. It will not change the legal risk in which they find themselves and the harassment they endure for simply being too poor to afford shelter.

Nevertheless, I stand by my vote for the reasons articulated by John. I do not believe that there is the political will on anyone's (Eugene, Springfield or Lane County) part to build a public shelter. I do not believe the public would vote for funds for that purpose. I believe that siting a shelter is damn near impossible in today's political/social environment.

Most of all, I have more first hand experience that I want in seeing what happens when community-based committees make recommendations that don't have mainstream support or realistic funding possibilities. These reports end up on shelves, never again to see the light of day. I desperately want something to come from this effort as imperfect as it might be.

For those reasons, I can not support including a public shelter in our recommendations.

From my perspective, the "problem" is not the mission but rather the lack of a public "take people as they come" shelter to supplement what the mission does. To get a true feel for the Mission I would suggest spending a night there unannounced, experiencing it as a guest would. Touring a mostly empty building during the day may give a person an academic understanding of what they do and their structure and rules, but the experience is much more revealing. I do not mean that as a cryptic suggestion that bad things go on there, but rather that the experience is difficult to explain.

Having said that, perhaps making the mission more accessible with public funding could be worked out, and perhaps Ernie (or Lynn, whom I don't know) would be amenable to that idea. Ernie is a wonderful human being whose commitment to what he does is remarkable. We have had many conversations over the years and he has been very consistent in discussing what he does and why he does it. But, as John stated, he has been battered around some in the public arena and may be reluctant to get involved in public process. I do not think having treatment or other interventions there is a viable option at this time for the reasons already discussed.

I had intended to respond to Hugh's disappointment with the committee's failure to recommend a public shelter, and still intend to, but John eloquently stated much of what I would have said.